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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
MFA FINAL VISUAL PRESENTATION

by

MARGARET JEAN ELIZABETH LANGLEY

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF FINE ARTS


IN

PRINTMAKING

DEPARTMENT OF ART AND DESIGN

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL 2001



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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

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Final Visual Presentation

submitted by MARGARET JEAN ELIZABETH LANGLEY partial
fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Art.

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DEPARTMENT OF ART AND DESIGN

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UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

I hereby release the following works for incorporation into the University Collections, University of Alberta, as part of the Master of Fine Arts Thesis Collection:

TITLE	DATE	MEDIUM	SIZE
Lost and Salvaged I, II, III, IV Insurance Value: \$800.00	2000	Etching, relief, Chine collé	26.5 cm x 14 cm
Collected Memories I, II Insurance Value: \$400.00	2000	Etching, relief, Chine collé	30 cm x 14.5 cm

Relics retained

By Margaret Langley

Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts in Printmaking

University of Alberta
Department of Art and Design
Edmonton, Alberta
September 11, 2001

Relics retained



Gareth Langley

MFA PRINTMAKING

This exhibition is the final visual presentation for
the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Printmaking

EXHIBITION DATES

September 11 – 23, 2001

OPENING RECEPTION

Thursday, September 13, 2001

7:00–10:00 pm

GALLERY HOURS

Tuesday to Friday: 10:00 am – 5:00 pm

Sunday: 2:00 – 5:00 pm

(closed Monday, Saturday, and statutory holidays)



1-1 FINE ARTS BUILDING | 89 AVENUE • 112 STREET
EDMONTON | ALBERTA | CANADA | T6G 2C9

TELEPHONE [780] 492-2081

Gareth Langley and the FAB Gallery would like to thank
Windsor Plywood for their assistance.

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"We comfort ourselves by reliving memories of protection. Something closed must retain our memories, while leaving them their original value as images. Memories of the outside world will never have the same tonality as those of home and, by recalling these memories, we add to our store of dreams; we are never real historians, but always near poets, and our emotion is perhaps nothing but an expression of a poetry that was lost"

-Gaston Bachelard, *The Poetics of Space*, New York, Orion Press, 1964

My work deals with the memory of landscape. We construct our stories from fragments of the past, and the image that remains is one with a select area of focus within a hazy, ill-defined backdrop.

With this in mind, I have created a body of work that deals with the artifacts of memory. Many people collect objects while on a walk in the woods or on the beach. Collected material is the physical stand-in which triggers memory. It is the area of focus that represents the general feeling. I make images which represent the objects, lost or discarded, washed up on the beach and then collected, boxed and given new meaning and spiritual significance. The abstract, ephemeral nature of the images refers to the intangible nature of memory. The actual object is less important than is the feelings generated from considering and trying to contextualize it. Within a series, the clarity of the subject often deteriorates into complete abstraction, which refers to the loss of detail that occurs in memory, as distance grows from the event.

The appearance of objects contained within a shallow box refers to collecting, but also has a spiritual level, in that something has been removed from its original context and given special emphasis. The boxed images are a reflection on the meaning of the essence of something that is held sacred on the deepest level. They are altar-like, and suggest reflection or prayer. The small scale is a device to make people come close and consider them in an intimate way and to consider their own memories.

These images are both generally about memory and personally about home. Water is an image which appears throughout my work. The idea of walking on the beach is personally significant, because for me the trip to the beach is the journey home, thus water is the primary element that comes to mind when I consider my memories of home. It is also a primal symbol for life that most people feel deeply, something which both gives and takes life. I am not alone in feeling that water is both a comfort and a threat.

Garet Langley, 2001

I have many thanks to give to many people. Thanks to Lyndal Osborne for many hours of guidance and to Steven Dixon for a lot of help in getting my act together. Thanks also to Liz Ingram, Walter Jule, Sean Caulfield, Linda Rubin, Jetske Sybesma, Marc Siegner, Louise Asselstine, Tom Hunter, Ken Horne and Dick Der for their help and advice.

Thank-you Fumiko Goto, Sima Khorrami, Rebecca Beardmore, Briana Palmer, Ruby Mah, Kelly Krueger, Patrick Bulas and Nick Smolinski for emotional support (can't stress that enough)! I wish I could thank Fumiko in person. In the emotional support category, I must also thank Wendy Grant, Roger Langley, Peter and Joyce Dafoe, Michael Walsh, Dan Steeves, Erik Edson, Suzette Kean, Eleanor Lazare, Heather Meek and Jennifer Prestash (for helping me relax now and then) and, above all, constant source of support, Adam Dafoe.

Lastly, thanks to the Gallery staff, Blair Brennan, Darren Bertrand, Brent Wasyk and Ruby again, not just for the help with this show but for two years of fun, and also to Errol Brager and all bartenders.

Garet Langley *Relics retained* List of works

1. Exhibition Signage, *Relics retained*, 2001
- 2-3. *Collected Memories I, II*
Etching, chine collé
14.5 cm x 29.5 cm
2000
4. Installation, *Collected Memories*, Signage, 2001
- 5-8. *Lost and Salvaged I, II, III, IV*
Etching, relief, chine collé
13.7 cm x 26.5 cm
2000
9. Installation, *Lost and Salvaged*, 2001
- 10-12. *Ships Passing Through the Night I, II, II*
Etching, relief, chine collé
13.7 cm x 26.5 cm
2001
13. Installation, *Ships Passing Through the Night*, 2001
- 14-15. *Slipping Tide I, II*
Etching, relief, drypoint, chine collé
13.7 cm x 26.5 cm
2001
16. Installation, *Slipping Tide*, 2001
- 17-19. *Anchored I, II, III*
Etching, relief, chine collé
12.5 cm x 26 cm
2001
20. Installation, *Anchored*, 2001
- 21-24. *Lust For Land I, II, III, IV*
Etching, relief, chine collé
13 cm x 24 cm
2001

39. *Untitled (self portrait)*
30 cm x 22 cm
Pinhole photograph
2001
40. *Untitled*
22 cm x 30 cm
Pinhole Photograph
2001
41. Installation, *Relics retained*, 2001
42. Invitation, Artist Statement, Curriculum Vitae, Acknowledgements, *Relics retained*, 2001

an uneasy

balance

MFA exhibits reach into our blurred past and present

By Gilbert A. Bouchard

As we walk through the Fine Arts Building Gallery, manager Blair Brennan lets me in on a secret. When hosting final presentation shows for students wrapping up their MFA studies, the gallery can't lose.

If the shows are similar, visitors to the two-storey exhibition hall are free to explore how two different artists interpret the same theme.

If the shows are different, viewers can contrast two interplays of craft and content produced by a duo of artists with relatively identical educational backgrounds, emerging simultaneously from the institutional crucible.

Then you have paired shows such as the one currently at the FAB Gallery that defy simple assessment and tantalize viewers with a subtle mingling of contrasting tropes and similar intellectual themes. The result is a push-pull virtual debate about the delicate mechanism by which we go about constructing pragmatic day-to-day realities.

Start with MFA Printmaking candidate Rebecca Beardmore's *Whisper* on the gallery's main floor.

Beardmore addresses the tricky idea of context, in particular how we endlessly and seamlessly shift between the literal, the figurative and the physical as we go about all aspects of daily life.

Her tact is to push the concept to its extreme, creating large "digitally emblazoned" pieces that juxtapose tightly packed rows of text, blurred, barely recognizable figures and physical

media that obscure more than they communicate. The final pieces are fascinating in that they present an aesthetically pleasing artistic whole, yet frustrate any attempt the viewer may have to "read" any one layer.

"The idea that any single layer cannot be relied upon for total coherency highlights the uneasy balance that exists between experience and understanding," she writes in her artistic statement. This tension between experience and understanding is all that more relevant in a culture flooded by a stream of mass media images that "ask little from us in regards to the deciphering of content."

Meanwhile on the second floor, Gareth Langley also explores the problems of cultural context and meaning in her show *Relics Retained*. Langley explores the significance we pack onto objects — "memories inspired by a catalyst."

The 25-year-old artist creates a series of surreal two-dimensional shadow boxes on which she prints strange little "interior landscapes" and depictions of murky little sea creatures. The intent is to underline how collected and saved objects are repositories of memories (in effect miniature "memory landscapes") and how these objects also refer back to the referential context they were plucked from.

Originally from Halifax and "very much a product of that culture" Langley's pieces underline the specificity of the ocean landscape and how one reacts to it, especially in hindsight. For Langley there's a complex mass of emotions associated with the ocean, "a sub-

lime feeling and a mix of attraction and fear, encompassing so many deaths, so much hidden under there." This complexity is neutralized when reduced to tiny objects taken from the waves for memory-based collections that become present only in the absence of their source.

In that way her project is very similar to her favourite author: fellow Nova Scotian Alistair MacLeod, author of *No Great Mischief*, a rollicking family-based memory novel stretching back to the Scottish highlands of 1779.

"I long for that culture, especially as I read MacLeod's book and contemplate the coming and going, the past and present of my home," she concludes. "In the end this work was inspired by my having left." ■

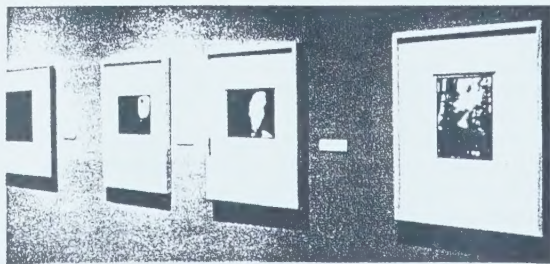
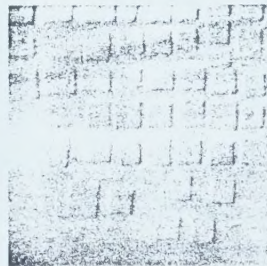


Photo: Jason B. Symington

folio back page

The Fine Arts Building Gallery is hosting two exhibits by MFA printmaking students. Gareth Langley's *Relics retained* and Rebecca Beardmore's *Whisper* run until Sept. 23. Gallery hours are 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. Tuesday to Friday and 2 – 5 p.m. Sunday (closed Monday, Saturday and statutory holidays). The FAB Gallery is located at the Fine Arts Building, 89 Ave. and 112 Street.

MFA students shed a new light on prints

ART REVIEW
MFA Printmaking Exhibit
with Gareth Langley
and Rebecca Beardmore
FAB Gallery
11-23 September

James Elford
CIRCULATION MANAGER

When you mention printmaking, many people erroneously think of the machine-produced Robert Bateman-style reproductions. If you mention printmaking to anyone who has seen the MFA Final exhibitions at the FAB gallery, they will likely think of a craft that has become an art in itself, capable of fluent expression in the visual language.

Originating in Japan and China as a method of reproduction that would create multiple images from a single plate, printmaking allowed the production of images that would be otherwise inaccessible to the general public. The handprinting still practised by modern printmakers means that these multiple images are all original works of art, bringing the artists' vision to the masses.

Both Gareth Langley and Rebecca Beardmore provide beautiful examples of their work and, with their very different styles and areas of interest, show the variety and detail achievable in printmaking.

For Rebecca Beardmore, the ideas do not come from the medium itself, but are instead conceptually based concepts expressed in the printmaking form. Her work attempts to address "issues of perception within a society engulfed in digitally emblazoned images and fabricated realities." To achieve this, Rebecca has chosen to concentrate on subtlety, rather than the "established practice of visual assault."

The result forces the viewer to question how to deal with the material, as Rebecca pointed out. "Do they take the time to read the text? Do they pause to hear the whisper," or has patience been lost in today's world of immediate gratification? Her work was certainly thought provoking, although it helped to have Rebecca around to fully appreciate the concepts behind her pieces. Still, the questions her work raises are more relevant than ever and the Rebecca feels that the medium she chose to use was the right one for those questions. "Print media is the essence of mass culture," Rebecca explained "so it is the perfect medium to explore those kind of ideas."

Gareth Langley's work concentrates on the "memory of landscape," examining the past and how our memories have "a select area of focus within a hazy, ill-defined backdrop." This describes his work perfectly.

The images in her work are like small pieces of memory, each with



Chris Govias/ THE GATEWAY

Gareth Langley is not the kind of printmaker you'd expect.

its own personalized significance. "I make images which represent objects," Gareth explains. "Lost or discarded, washed up on the beach and then collected, boxed, and given new meaning and spiritual significance."

With lines that range from the sharp definitions of ink, to washed-out colours and soft edged charcoal-like forms, Gareth's work moves through the whole breadth of our perceptions of the past.

Some of these images seem very abstract, while others are more definite. Gareth explains that this "refers to the loss of detail that occurs in memory, as distance grows from the event."

From these very different approaches, the two MFA students have created a fascinating body of work. The hard work and skill with which these artists use their medium will certainly make you see printmaking in a new light.

